



**A Thesaurus of African Languages**  
**A classified and annotated inventory of the**  
**spoken languages of Africa**  
**With an appendix on their written**  
**representation**

by  
Michael Mann and David Dalby



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an imprint of

**K·G·Saur London · München · New York · Paris**



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by  
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with  
**Philip Baker, Abdulaay Bari, Catherine Bozon-Verduraz**  
**Sidia Jatta and John Saeed**



Published for the  
**International African Institute**

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**K.G.Saur London • München • New York • Paris 1987**



British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Thesaurus of African languages: a classified and annotated inventory of the spoken languages of Africa with an appendix on their written representation.

1. African languages

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496 PL8005

ISBN 0-90-5450-24-8

Hans Zell Publishers

An imprint of K. G. Saur Ltd.

Shropshire House, 2-10 Capper Street, London WC1E 6JA, England

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Printed in Great Britain  
at the University Printing House, Oxford  
by David Stanford  
Printer to the University

ISBN 0-905450-24-8

IAS - Africana Ref.

Q.P.L  
8005  
M36  
1987  
Q.496  
T-343

foreword

since its foundation in 1926, the international african institute has been deeply concerned with the study of african languages as part of its approach to understanding african cultures and societies. this concern has been, and continues to be, practical as well as academic. one of the institute's earliest publications was the *practical orthography of african languages*, first issued in 1927. this was followed by diedrich westermann and ida ward's indispensable guide to phonetics for students of african languages (first published 1933, last reprint 1970) and the linguistic classifications and regional language surveys undertaken by margaret bryan, malcolm guthrie, a.n tucker, diedrich westermann and other leading specialists on african languages. a revival of the institute's interest in language studies was signalled by the *language map of africa* prepared by david dalby, honorary director of the i.a.i, 1974-80, and published in its initial form by the institute in 1977. a revised version of the *language map of africa* will appear in the near future (see announcement at the end of this volume).

the present thesaurus, tracing its origins to the *language map* and to the unesco meeting on the transcription of african languages held at niamey in 1978, takes these developments a stage further, representing, we believe, the most comprehensive work of this kind in the study of african languages.

as its compilers emphasise, this is a truly collaborative work, both in its present form in print and on computer. its publication, as with the institute's new *africa bibliography*, carries an open invitation to the speakers of african languages as well as those who study them professionally, to correct and expand the data presented here. this enterprise thus constitutes a novel open-ended process in which users may participate.

in addition to those organisations which contributed towards the cost of this project (especially the leverhulme trust), the institute is grateful to all those whose dedication to the enterprise made this publication possible, and particularly to michael mann for assuming the major task of computer editing this work.

i m lewis  
honorary director  
international african  
institute



# contents

	<i>preface</i>	viii
\$1	introduction	1
\$2	inventory of african languages	10
\$3	the languages of african states	176
\$4	writing african languages	206
\$5	documentation	220
\$6	language index	263

The initiation of the project later that year, as part of the language and education programme of the International African Institute, was made possible by a generous grant received from the Leverhulme Trust. This grant provided for the appointment of two full-time and two part-time research fellows over three years, including some allowance for travel and documentation, and a supplementary leave provision.

The project has received generous help and encouragement from many sources. It was first publicly proposed and debated at a public forum on the subject of 'The Development of the African Language Situation' organized by the Institute for African Studies at the University of Cambridge, in 1965, which brought together some 40 African linguists. The initiative of the project later that year, as part of the language and education programme of the International African Institute, was made possible by a generous grant received from the Leverhulme Trust. This grant provided for the appointment of two full-time and two part-time research fellows over three years, including some allowance for travel and documentation, and a supplementary leave provision.

In order to bring out work to a practical level, the Institute has set up a series of working parties, each with a specific task. The first of these, the 'Inventory of African Languages', was set up in 1966 and has since then produced a series of reports. The second, the 'Languages of African States', was set up in 1967 and has produced a series of reports. The third, the 'Writing African Languages', was set up in 1968 and has produced a series of reports. The fourth, the 'Documentation', was set up in 1969 and has produced a series of reports. The fifth, the 'Language Index', was set up in 1970 and has produced a series of reports.

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## §6. language index

### alphabetical order

the index follows the alphabetical order of the african reference alphabet:

a α λ b β c c c d d d q d e e e f f g g h h i i j j k k l l  
m m n n o o p p q q r r s s t t t θ u u v v w w x x y y z z z ?

phonetic letters are treated as alphabetically equivalent to a r a letters as follows:

a	—	æ	h	—	h	ʃ	—	ʃ
ɑ	—	ɑ, ɒ	ɪ	—	ɪ, i, I	θ	—	θ
b	—	β	λ	—	λ	ω	—	u, w, u
ð	—	h	o	—	ø	z	—	z
f	—	f	p	—	φ, ɸ	ε	—	ε
g	—	g	s	—	s	?	—	?

some symbols, especially those used to represent clicks, have been ignored for purposes of ordering:

! || ||| ! # c ' ' ' ' blank

diacritics have been ignored except where two entries are otherwise identical.

### main entries

each language appears in the index under its reference name as used in §2, together with set or subset, countries where it is spoken and map-reference, e.g:

<b>mende</b>	31C	
sierra leone		—31C mende is spoken in sierra leone
[mende Bk]		—it appears as <i>mende</i> on the map of Wdalby 1977
		(map-references are explained in §1, figure 1.3)
<b>bamanaw kaw</b>	31A	
mali—, sénégali;		mali—: see also under country heading in §3
—mauritanie		—mauritanie: see under this country heading in §3,
[bamana Ci+, Cj]		although we have not recorded <i>bamanaw kaw</i> as a first
		language in mauritanie

### supplementary entries

the index includes some names of broad reference not otherwise treated in §2, e.g:

<b>afroasiatic</b> Wgreenberg		—the term <i>afroasiatic</i> in Wgreenberg 1963b is applied to sets
1963b: 00-09, 001-4		00-09 and 001-004; others have used the terms <i>erythraic</i>
(erythraic,		and <i>hamito-semitic</i> with the same reference
hamito-semitic)		
<b>atlantic, n.w</b> Wkoelle 1854		—see index entry <i>atlantic, west</i> for application of the term
—atlantic, west		

### cross-references

kofolo: 27 kufuru	—see kufuru under set 27 in §2
ngbelima: X3.1	—see note X3.1 at end of subset X3 in §2
gurage, east: 01C.intro	—see introduction to subset 01C in §2
lunda-quico: angola	—see under country heading in §3
af i rendillc: kenya n.2	—see note 2 under kenya in §3



#āa: 93 dāwa  
 aabēru: 52C naaburu ti  
 aadi: 63C ibeto  
 aak: 71A fog naab  
 aakwa: M1 ecisukuma  
 aasukūma: M1  
 ecisukuma  
 #aaye: 91B ʔaiye  
 aamar ʔa: 08C hamar  
 apo  
 ababua: X3 libua  
 abacha: 63C basa  
 kwomu  
 abadi: 63C ibeto  
 abakan: 64A ʔan  
 abakpa: 83 ejaɣam  
 abaldugu: 71D bogon  
 abaluyia: E3 oluluyia  
 abanyom 83  
 nigeria [Ik44]  
 abasaggo: 67C ɔbandi  
 abatsa: 63C ba-a  
 kwomu  
 abayong: 62D abayongo  
 abayongo 62D  
 nigeria [abayong  
 I1212]  
 abbé: 43 abe  
 abbey: 43 abe  
 abbey khos: 43 abe  
 abbey morié: 43 abe  
 abbey tiofo: 43 abe  
 abbey ué: 43 abe  
 ab charin: 53 abjarin  
 abe 43  
 côte d'ivoire- [E1,  
 E12]  
 abé: 44A anyi  
 aberu: 52C naaburu ti  
 abewa: 48 ezi nupe  
 abe: 43 abe  
 abialag: 71A fog jieg  
 abidji: 43 ari; 44A anyi  
 abidji egenbé: 43 ari  
 abidji ogburu: 43 ari  
 abiem: 71A fog jieg  
 abigar: 71A fog naab  
 abine: 62D abini  
 abini 62D  
 nigeria [I1212]  
 abinsi: 64A jukun  
 abiri: 54 abiyi; 62D abini  
 abisi: 63D piti  
 abiyi 54  
 tchad, sudan [Ni]  
 abkar: 53 bura mabaɣ  
 abo 44f  
 cameroon [J13]  
 abō: 81 abong  
 aboh: 60 i8o; 60.3  
 abōn: 81 abong; 81.3  
 abong 81  
 nigeria, cameroon  
 [Jk44]  
 abō: B7 eboow  
 abouré: 44C abule  
 abo: 44f abo  
 abri: 26A abriwi  
 abribi: 26A abriwi  
 abriya: 26A abriwi  
 abriwi 26A  
 côte d'ivoire [abri

D121  
 abron: 44A twi kasa  
 abjarin 53  
 tchad  
 abū: 62F boki  
 abu: 63J jidda abu  
 abua: 62A abuan  
 abuan 62A  
 nigeria [abua I11]  
 abukela: 52A avukaya  
 abule 44C  
 côte d'ivoire [abure  
 E12]  
 abu leila: 39A ɔi mɔrɔɣ  
 abuloma: 62A obulom  
 abulu: 52C naaburu ti  
 abuur: 71C log me labuur  
 abure: 44C abule  
 abu sharib: 54 abu farib  
 abu sharin: 53 abjarin  
 abu sinun 55  
 sudan [abunun kanga  
 & PJ24]  
 abu farib 54  
 tchad  
 abuya: 71A fog jieg  
 aɣapito 44B  
 ghana- [gonja Fj3,  
 Fk, Fk1+, Fk2+]  
 aɣi: 003 mulwi  
 ace 43  
 côte d'ivoire- [akye  
 Ek, E12]  
 achanti: 44A twi kasa  
 achawa: P2 ciyao  
 acheron 39B  
 sudan [Qj13]  
 acheron: 39A ɔi mɔrɔɣ  
 achipa: 63C acipa  
 achode: 44B acode  
 acholi: 71C log acoli  
 acipa 63C  
 nigeria [Hj2]  
 acipawa: 63C acipa  
 acode 44B  
 ghana, togo [achode  
 Gk1]  
 acoli: 71C log acoli  
 ada: 63E kuturmi  
 adadama: 62D lebo  
 adāgbé: 407 dagme  
 adaiso: E5 kedaiso  
 adal: 02F ɣafar af  
 /adamawa/ 65  
 "adamawa": 201  
 fulfulde  
 adamawa-eastern  
 Wgreenberg 1963b:  
 65-69  
 adāmé: 407 dagme  
 adāngbe: 45 eweɛbe  
 adangme: 407 dagme  
 adanmé: 407 dagme  
 adagme: 407 dagme  
 adara: 63E kadara  
 adare: 01C gee sinaan  
 adari: 01C gee sinaan  
 addis ababa: 01C  
 amarəɣna  
 adélé: 46A sedere  
 adele: 46A sedere

adere 86E  
 cameroon [Jk44]  
 adhola: 71C ɔo p adola  
 adic: 44f bakɔɣo  
 adim: 62D odim  
 adiokrou: 43 mɔjukru  
 adiyé: 02H hadiyya  
 adja: 45 ajaɛbe; 51B  
 ɔaya; bénin  
 adnt: 08B dizi nu  
 adoma: 63C kerl  
 adong: 63E lungu  
 adogo: 71B ɔo ɔnwaa  
 adouma: B5 liduma  
 adsawa: P2 ciyao  
 adsoa: P2 ciyao  
 aduma: B5 liduma  
 adun 62D  
 nigeria [I122]  
 adya: 45 ajaɛbe  
 adyakte: 48 kakanda  
 adyukru: 43 mɔjukru  
 adyumba: B1 ajumba  
 adzema: 10 zarma  
 afa: 03E fuucaka  
 afaan oromo: 02B  
 ethiopia-, kenya  
 [raya Ti; wollo Tj;  
 tulama Rj4, Sj; mecha  
 Rj, Rj4, Rk, Rk2, Sk21;  
 qottu Tk, Uj; arusi  
 Sk2, Sk4, Tk; guji Si,  
 Si2; borana Si, Si1,  
 Sm, Sm4; orma Tn]  
 afaan oromo: kenya n.2  
 afade: 04 kotoko  
 afak: 71A atuot  
 afakani: 35 defaka  
 afa karatti 02C  
 ethiopia [kusumi Si1;  
 musile Si1; karatta  
 Si1; gato Si2]  
 afango: 63F biroom  
 afan mao 08A  
 ethiopia [s.mao Rk,  
 Rk1]  
 afan mao: 75A.1  
 afan oromo: 02B afaan  
 oromo  
 afan oromon: 02B afaan  
 oromo  
 afao: 63N eloyi  
 'afar: 02F ɣafar af  
 afar, north: 02F ɣafar  
 af  
 afar, south: 02F ɣafar  
 af  
 afenmai: 49 yekhee  
 affadeh: 04 kotoko  
 afiizarek: 63E izarek  
 afikpo: 60 i8o  
 afinaam: 22A endungo  
 af i rendille 02A  
 kenya [rendille Sm]  
 af i rendille: kenya n.2  
 affiti 57  
 sudan [Q13]  
 afizarek: 63E izarek  
 afo: 63N eloyi  
 afrikaans 99Ff  
 s.africa-, namibia-  
 [Ku, Kt, Lt+, Lu+, Lv+,

Mv, Mw, Mx, Ov, Px,  
 kaaps Mx]  
 afrikaans: namibia n.3  
 afrike 62F  
 nigeria [Ik44]  
 afrike: 62F /mbe afal/  
 afroasiatic Wgreenberg  
 1963b: 00-09, 001-4  
 (erythraic,  
 hamito-semitic)  
 af soomaali 02A  
 somalia-, kenya,  
 ethiopia-, djibouti-  
 [somali Tm, Tn, Uj, Uk;  
 juba-somali Ti, Ui, Um]  
 af soomaali: kenya n.2;  
 somalia n.1  
 afu: 63N eloyi  
 afunatam: 83 nta  
 afusare: 63E izarek;  
 63E.6  
 afutu: 44B awutu  
 afan ari 08C  
 ethiopia [ari Sk3]  
 aga: 11A kanuri  
 agame: 02F saho  
 agau: 02Q /agaw/  
 agar: 71A fog jieg  
 agara'iwa: 63C  
 agara'iwa 63C  
 nigeria [agara'iwa  
 Hj, Hj2]  
 agari: 63D ibiri; 84 gura  
 agatu: 61 idoma  
 agau: 02Q /agaw/; 92  
 ɔaulein  
 /agaw/ 02Q  
 agaw, abergelle: 02Q  
 xamtaga  
 agaw, northern: 02Q  
 balin  
 agaw, southern: 02Q  
 awgi  
 agbanyitō: 44B aɣapito  
 agbaragba: 83 efutop  
 agbarho: 49 urhobo;  
 49.10  
 agbawi: 48 gwari  
 yamma  
 agbiri: 63D ibiri; 84 gura  
 agbo: 62D lebo  
 agbōm: 45 fōmbe  
 ageer: 71A fog jieg  
 agew: 02Q /agaw/  
 agfa 47  
 nigeria  
 agie: 86Af ngi  
 agnagan: 44B apaga  
 agnang: 85 denya  
 agni: 44A anyi; côte  
 d'ivoire  
 agnio: 45 eweɛbe  
 ago 46B  
 togo [ahlo Gk31]  
 agōe: 45 gōmbe  
 agoi: 62D ro bambami;  
 62D.9  
 agola: 23B pajadinca  
 agolok: 63E agwolok  
 agoma: 63E kagoma

agotimé: 45 eweɛbe  
 agōi: 45 gōmbe  
 agu: 45 eweɛbe  
 aguro: 63E agwolok  
 agwagwane: 62D gwunc  
 agwa-gwunc: 62D  
 gwunc  
 agwatashi: 61 alago  
 agwolok 63E  
 nigeria [kagoro Ij44]  
 agwot: 63E agwolok  
 ayem 86Cf  
 cameroon [wum Jk3]  
 ahan 47  
 nigeria [Hk2]  
 ahanta 44A  
 ghana [Fi]  
 aheima: 39B masakin  
 ahizi: 26Cf n.ahizi  
 ahizi, n 26Cf  
 côte d'ivoire [ahizi  
 E11]  
 ahilō: 46B ago  
 ahilo: 46B ago  
 ahlon: 46B ago  
 ahilō: 46B ago  
 aho: 63N eloyi  
 ahilio: 63E follo  
 ahulan: 45 eweɛbe  
 ahilēi: 91B aikhoe  
 ahilēn: 91B aikhoe  
 aigang: 55 sani m aigag  
 aigag: 55 sani m aigag  
 aike: 63J ake  
 aikhoe 91B  
 botswana [nharo  
 Mu]  
 aikwe: 91B aikhoe  
 aimallal: 01C soddō  
 al'imeri: 52B mapɔutu li  
 alisan: 91B aikhoe  
 alise: 91B thalse  
 alivu: 52A luɔara ti  
 al'iye: 91B ʔaiye  
 aliza: bénin  
 aizāgbé: 45 "ɣla fera"  
 alizi: 26Cf n.ahizi  
 ajā: 45 ajaɛbe  
 aja: 45 ajaɛbe; 51B ɔaya  
 ajaɛbe 45  
 togo-, bénin- [aja  
 Gk4+]  
 ajagbe: 45 ajaɛbe  
 ajanji: 63D tjanji  
 aje 47  
 nigeria  
 ajer: 31B azayr  
 ajja: 51B ɔaya  
 ajumba 61  
 gabon [dyumba Jn]  
 aka: 52C asua ti  
 akaju: 83 ekajuk  
 akajuk: 83 ekajuk  
 akama: 62D okum  
 akamba: E5 kekamba  
 akamkpa: 83 ejaɣam  
 /akan/ 44A  
 -ghana [akan Fi]  
 a-karamojon: 72C a  
 karimojong  
 a karimojong  
 uganda- 72C

[karimojong Ri]  
 akasele: 41D basaai  
 akassa 35  
 nigeria [H14]  
 ākayōñ: 62E klog  
 ake 63J  
 nigeria [Ik2]  
 akem: 44A twi kasa  
 akele 62  
 gabon [kele Jm+]  
 akero a toposa 72C  
 sudan [toposa Ri]  
 akiek: 72D ɔyiek  
 akim: 44A twi kasa  
 ako: 60 epeye  
 akoiyang: 62E klog  
 akokolemu: 71C  
 ikokolemu  
 /akoko north/ 47  
 nigeria  
 akono: 47.7  
 akonto: 64A mbembe  
 akoon: 71A fog jieg  
 akoose <elug> A1  
 cameroon [elug J11,  
 J13]  
 akoose <mwamenam> A1  
 cameroon  
 akosa: K1 kosa  
 akose: A1 akoose  
 akoose A1  
 cameroon [kosi J11]  
 akoose <nnonog> A1  
 cameroon [ninong  
 J11]  
 akoose: A1 akoose  
 akpafu: 46A elwu  
 akpana: 46A ɛɛpana  
 akpanzhi: 64A ʔan  
 akparabong: 83  
 eparabong  
 akpet: 62D upet  
 akpo-mgbu-tolu: 60  
 ikwere  
 akposo: 46B iposo  
 akposso: 46B iposo  
 akpoto: 61 idoma  
 akposo: 46B iposo  
 akpwakum: X1 kwakum  
 aku 99Ef  
 gambia [Ai3]  
 akuku 49  
 nigeria [Ik31]  
 akuna-kuna: 62D gwunc  
 akunnu: (601) apes  
 akurakura: 62D gwunc  
 akurumba: 406 akurumfe  
 akurumfe 406  
 burkina faso, mali  
 [Fi, deforo Fi, fulse Fi]  
 akurumi: 63D tikurumi  
 akutuk āgidɔgoro: 72C  
 akutuk āginagatoom 72C  
 akutuk āginagatoom 72C  
 ethiopia [donyiro Ri,  
 Ri2]  
 akuut: 63F biroom  
 akwa C2  
 congo [Lm]  
 akwamu: 44A twi kasa  
 akwapem: 44A twi kasa

akwapim: 44A twi kasa  
 akweto: 87 nsari  
 akweya: 61 aɣa  
 akye: 63J ake  
 akyem: 44A twi kasa  
 akying: 44A twi kasa  
 ala: 02B afaan oromo;  
 63E koro  
 alaba 02H  
 ethiopia [Sk2]  
 alada: 45 gūmbe; 45 "ɣla  
 fera"  
 aladagbé: 45 gūmbe  
 aladian: 43 aladyaw  
 aladyā: 43 aladyaw  
 aladyaw 43  
 côte d'ivoire  
 [aladyan E11]  
 aladyan: 43 aladyaw  
 aladyan mbo: 43 aladyaw  
 alago 61  
 nigeria [Ik2+]  
 alagwa 09Af  
 tanzania [So3]  
 alaliwa: 11A dazaga  
 alante: 22C balanta  
 a lagbasé: 67B lagbase  
 alatinig: 86Df plinyin  
 alawa: 09Af alagwa  
 alege 62F  
 nigeria [Ik44]  
 ali 67A  
 centrafrique- [Li]  
 aliab: 71A fog jieg  
 alkaseybaten: 10 sogay  
 cini  
 alladian: 43 aladyaw  
 al luga al ɣarabiyya:  
 01A /al ɣarabiyya/  
 alo: 67E bagɔa  
 aloa: 07C kwang  
 alonda: M4 luunda  
 alog: A1 akoose <elug>  
 alunda: M4 luunda  
 alur: 71C ɔo aluur  
 aluru: 52A luɔara ti  
 aluu: 60 ikwere  
 alwer: B8.1  
 a lya non: 23A ɔ niyan  
 /al ɣarabiyya/ 01A  
 -algérie; -comores;  
 -djibouti; -libya;  
 -mali; -maroc;  
 -mauritanie; -misr;  
 -somalia; -sudan;  
 -suqutra; -tchad;  
 -tunisie; -western  
 sahara [arabic  
 Bh, Ji, Oj]  
 /al ɣarabiyya/: ethiopia  
 n.4; somalia n.1; sudan  
 n.2  
 ama: 57 pimaɣ; 81 eman;  
 93 ɣama  
 amadi: 69Bf ma ɔo  
 ama di: 69Bf ma ɔo  
 amahwindja: E1 amaji  
 amalindja: E1 amaji  
 à ma lo: 69Bf ma ɔo  
 amana: 81 eman  
 amanavil: 81 eman

amap: 63D timap  
 amapopoi: 52C  
 namapopoi ti  
 amara: 001 ti  
 biɔaawye  
 amarəɣna 01C  
 ethiopia- [amarinya  
 Rj, Rj2, Sj, Si2, Tj+]  
 amarinya: 01C  
 amarəɣna  
 amarro: 08A koore  
 nuuna  
 amarʔar: 001 ti  
 biɔaawye  
 ama ɔo: 69Bf ma ɔo  
 amashi: E1 amaji  
 amasi: 81 manta  
 amaji E1  
 zaire [shi Pn]  
 amba: X6 kwamba  
 ambali: B7 ebale  
 a mbanja: 67B mbanja  
 ambaquista: H2.1  
 ambele 86Af  
 cameroon  
 ambo M4/N3  
 zambia [Qr]  
 ambo: R2 ɔrikwapama  
 amboim: H2 mbul  
 ambuella: K1 mbwera  
 ambul: 03C kulere  
 amdang 503  
 tchad [mimi Mh, Mi]  
 amegi: 35 biseni  
 amengi: 52B ameggi  
 ameggi 52B  
 zaire [amengi P14]  
 amharic: 01C amarəɣna  
 aminuis 1x0: 93  
 w.ɣxopadaw  
 amkwe 91B  
 botswana  
 amo: 63D timap; 63D.8  
 amon: 63D timap  
 among: 63D timap  
 amraals: 91A  
 kxhwekovab  
 amu: G4 kiewahili  
 amuru 08A  
 ethiopia [shinasha  
 Rj4, Sj]  
 ana: 47 ede yoruba  
 anaang: 62C anaag  
 anaag 62C  
 nigeria [anang I12]  
 anabeze: 63D buji  
 anafejanzi: 63D tjanji  
 anago: 47 ede yoruba  
 anaguta: 63D iguta  
 anskaza: 11A dazaga  
 anang: 62C anaag  
 anāg: 62C anaag  
 anazelle: 63D ezelle  
 andaluz: 99Bf espanol  
 andasa B2  
 congo, gabon [ndasa  
 Kn3, Ko2]  
 ande gofa: 52B mamvu  
 andoni: 62C obolo  
 andreleti: 52A luɔara ti  
 andreleba ti: 52A luɔara  
 ti